

The argument vpon the fyrst Epistle of thapostle. S. John / by Erasmus of Roterodam.

**T**hat this is Saincte Iohn thapostles epis|tle, whiche wrote the Gospell, the very stile of the wordes selfe is a playne argument. He maketh much a dooe in the rehersall of light and darckenes, life and deathe, hare and loue, in often repetinge the wordes, as though they were taken out of the sayinge nexte before. Of the whiche sorte (to open my saying more plainly by example) this is one: *Loue not the Vuorlde, nether those thinges that are in the VWorld. Yf any manne loue the VWorld, the loue of the father is not in hym for all that is in the VWorld &c.* And anon after: *He is not of the father; but of the VWorld: and the Vuorlde passeth a Vuaye.* How often here is the worlde rehearsed? Fynally in all hys sayinge there is lesse compendyouss shortenes, and more open plainesse than in the writynge of the reste of thapostles. And as for thepistle, it is more evidently plaine, than nedeth any argumente, like as the two Epistles folowinge are, whiche are ascribed to one Iohn a cer|tayne senior, and not to Iohn the apostle.

Thus endeth the Argumente.

*The paraphrase of Erasmus vp/on the firste Epistle of Sainct Iohn.*

The fyrste Chapter.

The texte.

That which was from the beginnyng, which we haue herd, which we haue sene with our eyes, which we haue looked vpon, and oure handes haue handled, of the worde of the lyfe. And he lyfe appeared, and we haue sene and beare witnes, and shewe vnto you that eternall life, whiche was with the father, and appeared vnto vs. That whithe we haue sene and hearde, declare we vnto you, that ye also maye haue felowshyp with vs, and that oure felowship maye be with the father and his sonne Iesus Christ. And thys wryte we vnto you, that (ye maye reioyce, and that) youre ioye may be full.

**V**E write not vnto you, dearely beloued brethren, of stender or meane thinges, or of thinges vnknownen, but of a newe matter: howbeit so newe vnto vs, that with God it was from euerlasting. This is the worde of God, euen Iesus Christe bothe God and manne: whiche where he was al|wayes the sonne of God, woulde of late be the sonne of a mayden: and which after hys diuine nature was inuisible to mans eies, vouchesafed to take vpon hym an humayne bodye: and did vouchesafe to be familiarly conuersaunte among men, that he might aryse vs vp from the darkenes of our ignoraunce to the lyght of Gos|pelli.

knowlage: and that we myght begynne to beholde him with the eies of our mynde, whome we haue presentlye f<sup>o</sup>ne with the eies of our bodye. In dede the vnbelefe of mannes harte required, that the truthe shoulde bee credited by grosse outwarde experimentes: but yet the godlynes of them is more preferred by his owne worde, whiche where they neyther had sene him with theyr eyes, n<sup>o</sup> handled him with theyr handes, yet were moste certaynly perswaded, and bele|ued that he is the sonne of God, and thonly autor of mannes saluacyon. It is our parte therfore, to declare that, whiche we haue moste certaynly proued by our bodyly sences, vnto those that chaunced not to see it, and yet it is expedient to beleue, that none ought to trust to haue life, nor euerlastinge saluacion, but he that beleueth the Gospelles doctrine, wherof we are both witnesses and prea|chers. It is not the worde of manne, nether of lyght importaunce, but it is the worde of God, and of heauen, that geueth euerlastyng lyfe to them, which geue obedient hearyng vnto it: and deliue<sup>o</sup>ing from the deathe of synnes, from what so euer relygyon, from what so euer kynde of lyfe they shall turne them selues vnto it. Of this matter y<sup>t</sup> we speake of we speake of most assured credence, y<sup>e</sup> is to wete, euen the thing which we y<sup>e</sup> were continual waitours heard with our eares saw with our eies, nether sawe we afarre, of, or passinge by, but we loked pre|sently on to the full. And to cause a thinge to be credited, these are two princy|pall chief sences, and if that also bee but a small matter, we did not only heare hym teaching, prayinge, commaundyng wyndes and deuilles, and the father sondry tymes bearing witnes vnto the sonne, and we sawe hym not only worke myracles, suffre deathe and ryse agayne: but also we haue handled with these handes of oures. For whan he was rysen agayne from deathe, to thyntente to make vs beleue steofastlye that he was no vayne phantasie, but euen the lame manne alyue agayne, whome we had sene before dead, he caused vs to handle him with our handes, and laying to our fingres he shewed vs the places of his woundes. Mannekynde was deade, bycause it was in thraldome of vices and synnes: and he suffred deathe for our wickednes, that through his goodnesse we myght lyue vnto Innocencie. We were in doubt also our selues, whan we sawe hym dead, whan we sawe hym buried, but whan he rose again from death, he gaue vs sure hope of life. Mankynde had had no maner of hope of eternall life, except he had caused vs to see him with oure cies, and if he had not plucked awaye all doubtefulnes frō vs, by most manifestly apparent experimentes. He beinge manne suffred paynes for our synnes, and the same being God dooeth frely gene immortall lyfe to them that put theyr faythfull trust in hym. He ly|ued alwayes with the father, and this life was alwayes determinately purpo|sed for vs by the sonne, howbeit this counsail was not yet publyshed vnto the world, albeit the nacion of the Iewes (and yet none but they) loked for it by the prophetes oracles, as it

were in a dreame. In the meane while deathe reigned, lyfe laye hydden. Some tixed theyr hope in Moses, some in worldly wisdom, but the saluacion and life of all people was Iesus Christe, the worde of God the father, the teacher of Innocencye, and the geuer of Immortalitie. For none lyueth, but he that lyueth godly, nether dooeth any escape deathe▪ but he that atreyneth Immortalitye. At leyngth thys (Iesus christe) manifested him selfe vnto the world by hym selfe, shewing him selfe playnly to all the senses of man, and so thrusting him selfe in to the consciences of menne. And therefore he would haue vs to be lokers on and witnesses of all thinges, that he did on earthe▪ to

thintent they myght be faithfully published by our preachinge throughout all the whole vniuersall worlde: that like as we by Iesus haue obteyned lyfe and saluacion, in case we perseuer still in the Gospelles doctrine, euen so shoulde you also come with vs in to the felowshippe and company of this saluacion, in case you geue credence to our witnesse bearing▪ concernyng the thinge that you neither hearde nor sawe of hym, but learne it by our preachinge. We are nether vayne witnesses ne yet vncommaunded. He had vs to bee faithfull witnesses, and we recorde vnto all men with the greate daunger of our head, none other thinge than we haue most euydent experience of, with all the sences of the bo|dye. We are happye, in that our eares and eies haue made vs beleue: and yet you are neuertheles happye, if you geue credence vnto hys witnesse bearers. Our faithe hath glued vs vnto Christe, and made vs the children of God and membres of Christe: And your faith also shall engraffe you vnto the same bo|dye, that being ioyned with vs in the felowshippe of faithe, you myght make one bodye. And so shall it come to passe, that we shall not only bee all of one mynde amonge our selues, as the membres of one bodye, but we shall also haue peace and league with Iesus Christe; and by hym with God hys father, from whome we were before farre different: that like as the sonne is at moste perfite consent & communion of al thinges with the father, euen so we also by perfite algrement of the profession of the Gospell, shoulde bee heaped togyther in to one bodye of Christe, to be made partakers of all the goodes of our heade. I know you are ioyous of so happye a felowship, but yet I put you in remembraunce agayne of these thinges in writing, to thintent you myght reioyce more fully, if euery manne be not all together ioyous of hys owne saluacion, but all mens felicitie make euery one glad. For thys dooeth christen charitie cause, that eue|ry manne must be as glad of other mennes commodities, as of his owne. The moe that this felicitie is commune vnto, the more abundaunt shall euery ones ioye bee. Among vs there shall no being of one mynde stande together sub|stauncially, excepte we be fast glued together with mutuall charitie. We canne not

possibly haue peace with God, except we be answerably like vnto our head Iesus Christe: what so euer he hathe, he ascribeth it vnto the father: and what so euer we haue, it behoueth vs to ascribe it vnto Christe. Christe is the true lyght that procedeth from the father of all lyght. We canne not bee the mem|bres of Christe, except we bee bright: nether canne we haue lyght, onles we bee transformed into him, and contynue stedfastly vnto the ende in his felowship. Trueth and Innocencye is the lyght of the mynde, and synnes and wycked lustes are the darkenes: where lyght is, there is life: where darkenes are, there deathe is.

The texte.

And this is the tydinges which we haue hearde of hym and declare vnto you, that God is light, and in him is no darckenes at all. If we saie, that we haue felowship with him, and walke in darckenes, we lye, and do not the trueth. But and yf we walke in light euen as he is in light, then haue we felowship with him, & the bloud of Iesus Christ his sonne clenseth vs from all synne. If we saye that we haue no synne, we deceaue our selues, and the trueth is not in vs. If we knowledge our synnes, he is faythfull and iust to forgeue vs oure synnes, and to clense vs from all vnrightewesnes. If we say, we haue not synned, we make hym a lyar, and hys worde is not in vs.

What is the matter than, whiche we shewe vnto you, that you myght the more fully reioyce? In dede it is that, whiche we haue heard euen of him, and

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hauing heard it we make it cōmune vnto you: that God, forasmuch as he is all|together and of his own nature good, all wise, al pure, and al light & life, nether is ther any darkenes in him. In vs the matter standeth not after such sorte, but we haue muche darkenes euen of our selues: in case we haue any light, we are endebted in that all to gether vnto him, by whose free liberality we are deliuered from our olde synnes, and being deliuered from the darkenes of our former ig|noraunce we haue learned by the Gospelles doctrine to liue godly after Christe our heades example. If any manne boast, that he is through baptisme engra|ffed to the body of Christe, and hathe therby felowshippe with God the father: where as in the meane while he liueth yet in errors & vices of hys former lyfe, dooeth playnly lye. For seing (as I sayed before) God is farre from all maner felowship of darkenes: how can he possibly haue any thyng a dooe with hym, that lyueth yet still all together in error and olde vices? For he is clene out of the waye, that thinketh he can atteyne Innocencie by any other meanes than by Christ: agayne he is deceaued, that thinketh it ynough for him to be washen in baptisme, except he be answerably like

vnto his professiō through Innocencie of life? he that thinketh thus, is deceaued, and he lieth that sayeth it. For Christe is the trueth, whiche hathe nothing a doo with lyers. The fyrste steppe vnto light, is for a manne to acknowlage his darkenes: and the fyrst stepping forth of a manne vnto Innocencie, is to acknowlage his sinnes. Will ye heare therfore, by what token we maye knowe, that we haue true feloweshippe with God? Doubtles euen by thie: if like as he is light, and voyde of all darkenes, euen so shall we absteine after his example from the darkenes of all errours and vices, framyng all our conuersacion after the light of the Gospell: and yf like as the sonne hathe most high concorde with the father: euen so shoulde we also lyue Innocently and be all of one mynde amonge our selues. The father will not laye the traunsgressions of our olde life vnto our charge, whiche are ones doone awaye all the sorte of them by the precious blood of his sonne Iesu Christe, so that we from henceforthe absteine from all synne, as muche as in vs lyethe. The blood of Christe hathe washed awaye all fylthynes, and hathe washen it away from all folkes: yea but he hathe washen none but those that acknowlage theyr faultes. Yf we saye that we are not endaungered with synne, we deceaue our selues, we lyue in errour, we wandre in darkenes: and Christe, which is light, whiche is trueth is not in vs. For if he were truly in vs in dede, he would dispatche awaye thys darkenes of arrogaunt ignoraunce. And if it shall chaunce vs after receyuing of baptisme, to slyde backe agayne through mannes weaknes in to any synne, and as it were a myste obscure our light: we muste beware, that arrogauncie withdrawe vs not farther and farther of, and leade vs agayne from light in to our olde darkenes. Yea we muste geue dilygence, that through discrete sobrenes we maye be admoued vnto the light that shall dispatche awaye all darknes. If the brother perchaunce doo trespasse agaynste the brother, let eyther forgeue other hys trespasse, that God maye forgeue them also the trespasses that are done agaynste him. For in dede God hathe vpon this condicion promysed to forgeue vs, what so euer we haue oflfended agaynste him, if we forgeue our brothers fault: and exacteth hys debte (euen to the vttermoste farthinge) of him, whiche hauyng hys lorde mercifull vnto him, shewed him selfe smally mercifull towardes his felowe seruaunt: that is to saye, he iudgeth him vnworthy the mercye of God seinge he ones frely

forgaue him all his trespasses, that will not pardone a smale offence vnto hym, agaynst whome he eyther trespasseth euery daye, or elles maye tres|pace. That man wyll easily forgeue hym that trespasseth agaynste hym, whiche wyll remembre howe many wayes he offendeth both agaynst God and agaynst his neyghbour: And as it is a very hard matter for a man to do so as he offende in nothing, euen so is it a verye easye mater to

amende suche offences with forgeuing one an other. Forgeue thou thy neighbour, and thy neyghbour shall forgeue thee agayne: and God shall, euen as it were of very couenaunt, forgeue you both. I speake of those faultes, that chaunce euen among them that are good, yea but among men: and those faultes, that obscure the lyght of the Gospelles veritie, rather than extinguishe it. For God forbydde, that manslaughter, or whoredome, or sacrilege shoulde chaunce vpon their life, that are ones chosen among the chyl|dren of God. There is nothing that allureth more the mercie of God, and swageth his wrath, than yf a man acknowlage his faulte to God. If he that is a fearce cruel man forgeue him that acknowlageth his faulte, how muche more shall God do so, which is more mercifull than any man? He is by nature readyly bent vnto mercie, and hath promised vs forgeuenes vpon this condicion: *forgeue, and it shalbe forgeuen vnto you*. If he would not for|geue, in that he is good: yet he shuld forgeue because he is iust & of faithful credence. See that thou accomplyshe the prescribed condicion, and he shal not forget his couenaunt. If we with our whole harte forgeue our neigh|bour that offendeth vs, God shall also forgeue vs, not onely one synne or an other, but all synnes: so that we to our powers geue diligence, that we may be once voyde of all vices. And yf we be not able fully to attayne vnto that for the frayltie of mannes body, yet he of his liberal free goodnes shal make good, that is wantynge in our strengthes, and shall cleanse vs from all our offences, who perchaunce suffereth some tokens of our olde former lyfe to remayne stil in vs, for this purpose, that we should acknowlage our weakenes. For in dede he is better content▪ with a sinner that misliketh him selfe, than with a righteous that mā standeth in his own conceite. He would that y• saluacion of men shoulde be ascribed vnto his mercy, and not to our merytes. And now he hath testified, that there is no mortall manne on yearth, but he offendeth in some thyng. And yf we wyl say, that we haue no synne in vs, we make wod a liar, and say agaynst hym: and he that gayne|sayeth hym must nedes lye.

#### The .ii. Chapter.

The texte.

My lytle children, these thynges wryte I vnto you, that ye synne not. And yf any manne sinne, we haue an aduocate with the father, Iesus Christ the righteous: and he it is that obtey|neth grace for our sinnes: not for our sinnes onely, but also for the synnes of all the worlde. And hereby we are sure that we know hym, yf we kepe his commaundementes. He that sayeth, I knowe hym, and kepeth not his commaundementes, is a liar, and the verytie is not in hym. But whose kepeth his worde, in hym is the loue of God perfecte in dede: hereby we know that we are in hym. He that sayeth, he abyde|th in hym, ought to walke as he walked.

**T**Hese thynges do I wryte, my lytle children, not that synne should be cōmitted the more licenciouslye vpon truste of the mercye that is ordayned, but that no man shoulde synne at all, as muche as in vs lyeth. After that Christ hath once for|geuen vs all oure transgressions, it is requisite for vs to applie al our studious endeouours to this ende, that we may kepe innocēcie vndefiled. And yet if it chaunce vs to slide backe agayne into any sinne, ther is no cause why we should despayre of forgeuenes, we haue God ētreteable, & with him we haue a louing patrone & a trusty, who being the sonne, obteyneth whatsoeuer he wyll of the father, and wisheth hartyllye wel vnto vs: which gaue himselfe to saue vs, so that we do vtterly and from the botome of our heartes mislike our selues, and geue our diligence agayne to better. He alone hath nothing to be pardoned of, and he it is that maketh intercession for the synnes of his membres, and reconcfleth the falther (whiche is offended) vnto vs, and causeth hym to bee mercyfull vnto vs: & not vnto vs onely, which haue now embraced hs doctrine, but also vn|to all mankynde vniuersally, yf they with a syncere hearte confesse themsellues to be sinners, and purpose to leade an innocente lyfe, and so purposed go on forward, and kepe it substauncially. For baptisme doeth not make vs free from the obseruacion of Moses law for that purpose, that we shoulde synne afterwarde licencious•y without punishment, but that we shoulde more fi•mely stycke to the loue of the Gospell, whiche causeth more to bee done of the wyllynge, than so many lawes of Moses gette perforce of the cōstrayned. He cōmaunded many thinges in a smal rowme, that cōmaūded men to loue their neighbours, euen as he dyd vs. He driueth not vs to loue hym agayne, but he enticeth vs, he prouoketh vs, he kindleth vs. Whosoe|uer knoweth God aryght, cannot chose but loue hym behemētly. For euery one that professeth God with hys mouthe, knoweth not God: but he that is kyndled with the flame of gospellyke charitie, and doeth wyllynglye and gladly, that whiche he dyd perfutely before, that we do good euen vnto our enemies, and that for the saluacion of our neyghbour we wyll not stycke to stād in daūger of our life, he declareth hymselfe to know god. But & if a mā make hys boaste, that he knoweth god, in that, that he beinge taught hys principles hath learned the misteries of the fayth, in that beinge baptised he hath professed his name, neither for al that foloweth the example of his charitie, he is a lyar, neither hath he yet fully learned to knowe God, in as|much as god is not knownen, excepte faythe be garnyshed with charitie. And whosoeuer is a lyar, Christ whiche is the very trueth selfe, dwelleth not in hym: and whosoeuer hath not Christ dwellyng in hym, is not a liuelly membre of his body. Faith without loue is a vayne matter and a deade. To bee short, loue is not idle, it omitteth none of those thynges, that it knoweth be acceptable vnto hym whō it loueth. Christ sayd he would not acknowlage hym to be his disciple,



that woulde not take vp his crosse and folow hym, walkyng in y<sup>r</sup> foresteppes of perfite charitie. Therfore he that obserueth his saying, declareth in dede that he holdeth fast the perfe and ryght euangelical charitie. By trial herof we shal know, that we are in his body, & that we haue receyued hys spirit. Wherto doest y<sup>r</sup> make thy vaunt, as a mēbre of Christe, in that thou art through baptisme receyued into the flock of christiās? It is not an idle professiō, it is a not fine fingred professiō.

It is not the profession that maketh a true membre of Christe, but the imitacion. He that professeth with his mouthe that he is regenerate in Christ, must walke in his fotesteppes. He lyued not to him selfe, he died not for himselfe: He gaue himselfe wholly for vs, he dyd good to all folkes, he gaue no reuylngge worde agayne to any man, but whan he was nayled on the crosse, he prayed to the fater for them that spake reuilyngly agaynste him. This is the gospellike and perfite charitie, whiche they ought to folowe in their dedes, that professe them selues to be Christes disciples.

The texte.

Brethren, I write no newe commaundement vnto you: but that olde commaudemēt, which ye haue had from the beginning. The olde commaundement is the worde, which ye haue heard from the beginning. Agayne, a newe commaundement I write vnto you, that is true in hym, and the same is true also in you: for the darkenes is past and the true lighte nowe shyneth. He that saieth howe that he is in the lyght, and yet hateth his brother, is in darknes euen vntyll this tyme. He that loueth his brother, abydeh in the lyght, and there is none occasion of euill in him. He that hateth his brother, is in darkenes, and walketh in darkenes: and can not tell whither he goeth, because that darkenes hath blynded his eyes.

Dearely beloued, thys commaundement of charitie, that I wryte vnto you, is no newe commaundemente, but euen Moses lawe declared it long agoe, or rather Christe by it, whiche renewed his commaundement in the gospell: and so renewed it, that he made it peculiarly his owne. *This* (quod he) *is my commaundement, that you shoulde loue one another, as I haue loued you.* Therefore it is neither any new commaundement, neither my commaundement, that I geue now vnto you, ne yet suche a one as you haue not heard of hitherto, but it is the selfe same commaundemente, that we gaue vnto you by and by in the begynnyng by thautorytie of Christe. And yet agayne the same is newe that I write nowe vnto you. It was an olde commaundement, but it is brought out of vse through the



maners of the people. The Iewes learned by heart: *Thou shalte loue the Lorde thy God, thou shalte loue thy neighbour*; but yet euery one serued his own gaine. Christ renewed thys vnto vs, yea and loued vs more than himselfe, and he loued not his neigh|bours, but he loued his enemies, yea those that turned way wardly from him and that were worthy of euyl. This albeit I knowe you haue heard of, long ago, yet it ought to be renewed from tyme to tyme with often relhersall, that it maye sticke the more depely in youre mynde, seing it is the chief matter of the gospels profession. This was a true commaunde|ment in Christ, which performed in dede the thyng that he taughte: but it was not true in you, as long as you hated your neighbour, as long as you recompenced euill worde for euell worde, and wrong for wrong. But now it is true in you also, synce the true sprong vp lighte of the gospels doctrine hath dispatched awaye y<sup>e</sup> darkenes of your former life, & hath taught that none is acceptable, but he that would loue the good for Christes sake, & loue thē also that are bad to this ende, that they should be cōuerted vnto Christ. Those that folowe this doctrine, walke in lyghte, & offende not in the darkenes of euill lustes. The hate of the neighbour powreth darkenes into the mynd. Therefore he that is so washē and so hath professed Christ, that he geueth not ouer to hate his brother, he is deceaued in beleuyng that he walketh in light, where he is yet in darkenes. For God remitteth not him, y<sup>e</sup> forgeueth not his brother. For it is not ynoughe to haue geuen ouer theft, whoredom & murdre, in baptisme, except al holowhartednes be also plucked quite out of y<sup>e</sup> mind, & in stede of hate, charitie come in place.

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He that contynueth styll in the loue of hys neyghbour, abydeth in lyghte, which is Christ Iesus, and stobleth not as walking in darknes: For true charitie is so farre of from hurtyng any body, that it suffreth all thynges, and turneth all thynges into good. Contrarywyse he that hateth his bro|ther, although he haue geuen ouer to offer vnto images, although he haue geuē ouer to be an vsurour or a churche robber, yet he is styl in darkenes, & seruing his owne blynde lustes he walketh in darkenes: neyther seeth he the strayght waye vnto saluacion, althoughe the gossell shyne clearely vpon him. And all is long of the darkenes of the hate of his brother, that hath so blynded his eyes. Where hate reigneth, there is the iudgement blynde.

The text.

Babes, I write vnto you howe that your sinnes are forgeuen you for his names sake. I write vnto you fathers, howe that you haue knowen him that is from the begynning. I wryte vnto you yongmen, howe that ye haue ouercome that wicked. I write vnto you lytle children, howe that ye haue

knownen the father. I haue written vnto you fathers, howe that ye haue knownen him that is from the begynnyng. I haue written vnto you yonge men, how that ye are strong, and the worde of god abydeth in you, and ye haue ouercome that wicked. Se that ye loue not the world, nether the thinges that are in the worlde. If any man loue the worlde, the loue of the father is not in him. For all that is in the worlde (as the lust of the fleshe, and the lust of the eies and the pride of life) is not of the father, but of the worlde. And the worlde passeth awaye, and the lust therof: but he that fulfylleth the will of God, abydeth for euer.

I loue you euen as a mother loueth her children, and write for that pur|pose, partlie reioycynge at your felicitie, partly exhortyng you to goe fore|ward better and better. I reioyce at you, as my most deare children, whom I haue begotten agayne by the sede of the gospels doctrine vnto Christ, in that the synnes of your former lyfe are pardoned you, and freely pardoned you, for none other cause, but because you haue professed the name of the lorde Iesu Christe, that you shoulde also remembre after his example fre|lye to forgeue euerye one his neyghbour. I write vnto you, whom not so muche the processe of age as the grautie of maners and godly carefulnesse towards them that be yonger, doeth make worthy the name of fathers: reioyceing in you, that you are not onely endued with a commune maner of wisdome, wherby olde men are commended almost because of the expery|ence of thinges, and geue the better counsel to the ignoraunte yong folkes, but in that you haue reknowledged Iesus Christe the autor of saluacion: whiche not onely is of a greate olde age, but also hathe bene alwayes wyth the father. You being of great age knowe him that is eternal: and the more fully you knowe him, so much the more diligently you preache him to them that be of slenderer age. Olde folkes do remembre and kepe in mynde many olde auncient thynges, and you kepe him in mynde that was before al age. I write vnto you yongment which through the strength of faith haue ouer|come that wicked & vnruly Satan. The cōmune sorte of yongmen thinketh themselues happie in that they geue lightly place to no mā because of their bodyly strength. But you are more happie, that by reason of youre strength of mynd, you could be ouercome, neither with enticementes of voluptuous pleasures, ne w<sup>t</sup> any terrours of y<sup>e</sup>world. Other mens actiuitie florisheth in battail, but your actiuitie hath florished more nobly against the assaultes of deuils, the fleshe, & the world. I write vnto you childrē, which although for tendernes of your yeares, you are not skilled as yet in y<sup>•</sup> knowlage of world|ly matters, yet you haue already attained the thīg, y<sup>•</sup> getteth you euerlastīg felicitie. In other childrē it is y<sup>•</sup> first special tokē of wit, if they acknowledge

their father, but you knowe your heauenly father, by whom you are regenerate vnto heauen. Let euery one mainteyne that he hath, and encrease in that he hath. For this cause sake, I bothe reioyce in euerye one, and also warne all and euery orders and states of you, that acknowledgynge your felicitie, you geue thanks to God youre autour, and hauynge in remembrance, whither you must go, preace alwayes forewarde vnto more perfecciō. I wil rehearse it vnto you therefore, that ye can not forget it. I haue written vnto you fathers, for you knowe him whiche hath nother beginning nor endynge, that the desyre of this lyfe should in no wyse stier you, seynge you make haste to the life that neuer shal haue ende. I haue written vnto you yongmen, because you haue ouercome the ruflynge nyctenesse of youth through the valiaunt strengthe of mynde, and because you haue with a constaunte heart kepte the worde of the Gospell, and haue by the helpe of Christ, ouercome the Deuill the continuall enemye of mankynde. Continue you styll in victorie, contemne styll that whiche you haue hitherto contemned, and loue more and more that you haue begon to loue. The worlde enticeth by false imaginacions of transitorye goodes, and frayeth with a vayne and false shewe of euilles. As for you, let those thinges fraye you whiche are euill in dede, and neuer haue ende. And let these thinges catche you that are good in dede and knowe none ende. Folowe the lyght of the gospell and loue heauenly thynges, whiche the heauenlye father promyseth, vnto whom you are regenerate by Christ. Flee the darknes of naughtie lustes, wherby this worlde layeth bayte with countrefaict goodes. It can not possiblie be, that you can loue bothe at ones, nor serue both at ones. There is none agrement betwene God and the worlde, there is no concorde betwene lyght and darknes: whosoouer loueth the worlde, swarueth from the loue of God the father. I speake not of this worlde, which god made, wherein we liue, wil we nil we. The wiked greedy desires of vayne thinges (wherein the common sort of menne repose their felicitie, forgetting the thinges that are truely good in dede) I cal the world. It is not the place, howe farre of so euer it be, not the raymente, not the meate, not the title, that exemteth you frō the world, but a mind that is pure from those desires y<sup>e</sup> I spake of. And what hath this world, that is not noisomly hurtful? There are thre thinges, y<sup>e</sup> it most chiefly deceineth folishe & vncircumspect folkes withall: the voluptuous pleasure of the fleshe, enticementes of the eies, and hygge statelynes and proude galauntnes of lyfe. For it obiecteth certayne iugglinges of vayne pleasures to clawe the senses of the bodye withall for a tyme, that the mynde maye in the meane while be called awaye from the studie of heauenlye good thynges. For the desyre of suche maner of good thynges, the heauenlye spirite suggesteth, whom God the father geueth vnto his childrē that are truly regenerate by Christ. The deuill hath also a spirite of his owne, by whom he suggesteth a pernicious loue of thynges neyther true nor durable, vnto them that haue bent themselues throughly vnto this worlde. He suggesteth the naughtye sportes of lechery, to tittle the mēbres of the body withal

through a folishe and a filthy itching delite. He suggesteth the delite of  
fyne meates & drinke to please y<sup>o</sup> paunche & the mouth w<sup>al</sup>. He  
suggesteth the swetnes of idlenes & slepe, that the mynde may waxe the  
more sluggishe throughe custume,

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He suggesteth wanton songes and shameles fables, to anoynt the eares  
withall. He suggesteth the wanton enticementes of beawties and sondry  
kyndes of thinges to beholde, to delite the eies withall. He suggesteth the  
pompes and ioylitie of riches, the occasions of ambicion. Finally he  
allu|reth mennes myndes on euery parte awaye from the true and  
euerlasting good thinges vnto the vayne imaginacions of good thinges. Let  
him that is entangled with the desire of these thinges, knowe that he is  
not moued by the spirite of the heauenly father, but by the spirite of the  
worlde. The worlde, lyke as it consisteth vpon elementes that endure but  
for a time, e|uen so geueth it nothing but that whiche shall shortly  
perishe. God, like as he is eternall, euen so geueth he freely euerlasting  
rewardes. Therefore he that dependeth vpon the succours of the worlde,  
foloweth a certayne felicitie that is both vayne and shall shortly be taken  
awaie, which, euen casu|altie that commeth vnthought vpon, plucketh  
away in this worlde, or at lest age dispatcheth it. Truly death that shall  
come vn to euery man, plucketh quite awaye all the dreame of false  
pleasures. Whan the mater is taken awaye, the pleasure perisheth, and  
sorowes come in place. Whan the man is taken away, al is gone to naught,  
and euerlasting torment cometh in place. But he that •beieth vnto the  
father that calleth him vnto the loue of an heauenly lyfe, his felicitie shal  
neuer haue ende. For he that geueth it, knoweth none ende. The  
vnhurtfull commodities of this worlde are to be vsed for the tyme, yea but  
smallye, but moderately, to the necessitie of nature, not to the  
voluptuose fulfylling of pleasure. But the chiefe studye of mynde ought  
to be turned to the thynges that be eternall, whereunto the vse of all  
other thynges ought also to be referred.

The text.

Lytell children, it is the last time, and as ye haue hearde howe that Antichrist  
shall come, euen nowe are theremany begonne to be Antichristes already:  
wherby we knowe, that it is the laste tyme. They went out from vs, but they  
were not of vs. For yf they had bene of vs they would no doubt haue  
continued with vs. But that it might appeare, that they werenot of vs.  
Ne|uertheles, ye haue an oyntment of him that is holy, and ye knowe all  
thynges. I haue not written vnto you, as though ye knewe not the trueth: but  
as thoughe ye knewe it, and knowe also, that no lye commeth of trueth. Who  
is a lyar, but he that denieth that Iesus is Christe? the same is Antichriste,

that denieth the father and the sonne. Whosoeuer denieth the sonne, the same hath not the father, he that knowledgeth the sonne, hath the father also. Let therefore abyde in you that same which ye heard from the begynnyng.

The felicitie of godly men doeth not yet appeare, but it shalbe manyfestly opened in the commyng of our Lorde Iesu Christ. The wicked seme to lyue in the meane time swetely here in this worlde, but euerlastinge sorrowe he geth ouerthem and that shortly. For the laste tyme semeth to be present, wherein (the course of thinges being turned vpsyde downe,) those shall rayne with Christe, that are formented now for Christes sake: and they shalbe brought to naught, whiche be nowe rebelles agaynst Christe. You haue hearde that Antichrist shall come, who being armed with all the mayntenaunce and iugglinges of this worlde, shoulde kepe warre against Christe, and by and by when Antichriste is ouercome againe, the body of Christe shalbe deliuered from all euils, and the membres of the deuill shall be laden with the burthens of all euilles. Therefore the commynge of this Antichrist, (of whom the Apostles tolde you before) semeth not to be farre

of. For this worlde hath so muche preuayled agaynste the doctrine of the Gospell, that there are begonne euen nowe all readye to be a great sorte, that deserue the name of Antichrist, whose lyfe and doctrine and all theyr hole studye is agaynst Christ. For what appeare they to be elles, than Antichristes gentilmen husshers, and the last tokens of the plage to come? For they do lesse hurt vnto Christes people that be vtterly straügers from Christ, than those that being ones conuersaunt in his castelles, and by and by become runneagates, assault Christe with Christes owne garisons and armour. For they countrefaite euen those thinges, whiche declare in christians, the vertue, the holynes, the doctrine, the auctoritie, the miracles of Christ. And in dede they went out of vs, howbeit there is no matter, why they should much trouble you, they were conuersaunt among vs, but they were none of ours. They were enemies of Christe, euen whan they were dwelling in his castelles. But and if they had truely bene on our syde, they wolde haue continued stil to thende with vs. They professed Christ in title and behauour, but in their mynde they loued the worlde vehemently. And therefore when it is come to the stormes of persecucions, whan it is come to the flame of afflicciōs, they haue shewed thēselues, what they were before. Nowe they are out from vs, they extolle vs, as a body ouerlaid with euil humours, and now being open enemies they shall lesse hurt, than holowe harted companions. Thus it was Christes wyll, that it may evidently apppeare, that all belonge not to the bodye of Christe, that are washen in his name, that

professe his name, and are partakers of the sacramentes of the Church. A true and stedfast dispising of the world sheweth a man to be a Christian. A mynde that is vnbroken and vnconquered agaynst al wanton enticemētes, agaynst all iniuries, sheweth a man to be a Christian. He that vpon occasion shrinketh from the doctrine of Christe, dyd countrefaite a christianne, but he was no christian. In dede it is expedient that they be openly seperated from vs, lest in outward appearaunce seming to be good, they should do the more harme to them that are not ware. Although they were not vnknownen vnto you, yea before they withdrewe themselues o|penly. For the vnccion of Christ, wherof you are also named, that is to saye the inspiracion of the spirite of Christ, sheweth playnly ynough who are true christians, and who are not. For he that is a spirituall man, iudgeth althynges. They were not vnknownen, but they were borne with al, if per|chaunce they woulde repent. It is true that I saye: neither doe I wryte these thinges vnto you, as thoughe you were ignoraunt of the trueth, selyng you haue the spirite of Christ to your teacher, which suffereth you not to be ignoraunt of any thing: but I put you in remembraunce of the thyng that you know, to thintent you myght y• more surely sticke vnto the trueth, and not to be disquieted whan sorowes do happen. You are the fewer, but you are the sounder, you are the more purely clenched, you are the quieter. Nothing is taken away of the body, though the botche be launced, though the corrupt matter be runne out. You knowe that Christ is the trueth, and all kynde of lyeng is cleane contrarie to him. Whosoeuer is an holowhar|ted dissembler, with him Christe hath nothing adoe, howe faste so euer he professe him with his mouthe. There are manye facions of lyenges. He that is a lyar, by what maner waye soeuer it be, denieth Christe, whiche is

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the trueth, and receyueth no mixture of any kinde of lye. He that is agaynst the trueth, is agaynst Christ: he that is agaynste Christe is Antichrist. And there is none more wicked a kynde of lyeng, than to denye that Iesus is Christ: and that do many false prophetes of the Iewes, whiche denie hym to be he, whom Moses and the prophetes oracles did long agoe promise vnto the worlde to be the reuenger, and autor of saluacion: and promyse an other Antichrist I wote not whom, in stede of Christe. Doubtles who so euer is such a one, is playne Antichrist. Agayne there are, that although they professe with their mouthe, that Iesus is Christe, yet they lyue after such sorte, as though his doctrine were vayne, as thoughe the rewardes that he hathe promysed were vayne. He taught, that the pore in spirite are blessed, because the kyngdome of heauen abydeth for them. And an other man which applieth al his whole forcast to this end, to enlarge his landes, to buylde royall houses, to enhaūce his rentes, to stuffe his coafers with money gotten by hoke and by crooke, to

be aloft in autoritie, to oppresse the poore, and to exercise tyrannie: doeth he not cleane contrary vnto Christ, whose doctrine he maketh a lyar, as much as in hym lyeth? Christ taught, that they are blessed, whiche hungre and thirst after ryghteousnes: and an other reposeth his felicitie in ryot, in the pleasures of the paunche and bely cheare: doeth he not denye Christ? He teacheth, that the meke are blessed, because they shall possesse that heauenly lande, from whence they can not be cast downe. And an other man thinketh him happye, yf he can with op|pressing of the pore establishe his owne wealthe. He teacheth that they are blessed, whiche mourne in this world, because euerlasting comforte is due vnto them. And an other man that in all thynges foloweth the delicate pleasures of this worlde: doeth he not denie Christ? He teacheth, that they are blessed, whiche are mercifull towards their neyghbours. And this mā pleaseth him selfe, because of his owne accorde he doeth him sorowe that is better than himselfe. Christe teacheth that they are blessed, whiche are vexed with reuylyng wordes and affliccions for the rightuousnes of the Gospelles sake. And this man forcasteth with al maner of dissembling and wyles to please the world. Christ acknowledgeth him for his disciple, that taketh vp his crosse on his shoulders, and foloweth him. And an other man thinketh himselfe neuertheles christen man, if he escape all grief.

Christe sayeth vnto his: *In the VVorlde you shall haue oppression, but in me you shall haue peace:* and yet vnto these men Christ is heauiē, & the worlde swete. He commaundeth to do good euen vnto a mannes enemye, and an other doth wrong to a man without deserte. Doth not he, that lyueth after such sorte, resistingly denie Christ? his mouth sayeth not agaynst him, but hys life doth. Whan the sonne taught agaynst these maners, the father sayed, *Heare him.* But what sayeth this manne? No, heare not him, it is harde geare that he teacheth, heare the worlde. Therefore like as he resisteth the sonne, euen so doethe he repugne agaynste the father, and seynge he is of the facion of the worlde, he disseuereth himselfe from the flocke of them, whom Christ hath chosen out of this worlde. Christe hath nothing a doe with this worlde, and he that glueth himself vnto it, repugneth agaynste Christ. and playeth Antichrist, and denieth both the father and the sonne. For the father and the sonne are of an vnseperable societie. Here the Iewe

wyll crye with open mouthe agaynste me: I acknowlage the father, but the sonne I acknowlage not. But what soeuer thou trespacest agaynst the sonne, thou trespacest the same agaynst the father. The sonne neuer did nor taughte any thing, but by the auctoritie of the father. He that taketh from the sonne, taketh from the father. Therefore he that estraungeth him



selfe from the felowship of the sonne, he neither pertaineth to the body of Christ, whiche is the catholike churche, nor hath felowshippe with God the father, whiche agreeth in all thinges with the sonne. You see with what great leoperdie folles disseuer themselues from the sonne. Therefore continue you styll in the gospels trueth, which you receiued first of the surely tried Apostles. Let not the lyeng tales of the false Apostles drawe you awaye.

The texte.

If that which ye hearde from the begynnyngest all remayne in you, ye also shall contynewe in the sonne, and in the father. And thys is the promes that he hath promysed vs, euen eternall lyfe. These thinges haue I written vnto you, concerninge them that disceaue you. And the anoyntyng which ye haue receaued of him, dwelleth in you. And ye nede not, that anye manne teache you: but as the anoynting teacheth you of all thynges, and is true, and no lye, and as it hath taught you, euen so byde therin. And now babes abyde in him: that when he shall appeare we may be bold, and not be made ashamed of him at his comming: if ye know that he is rightelous, know also that euevery one which doth rightewisenes, is borne of him.

Yf you continue stedfast in that thyng whyche we delyuered fyrst vnto you, you shal abyde in the felowship of God the father and of his sonne Iesus. If anye man thynke it an harde matter to perseuer in the professyng of the Gospell, because of the afflictions of the wicked, thinke vpon the rewarde. God requireth an harde matter, but the rewarde is greate that he promiseth. For he promiseth nether riches, nor kyngdome, nether the pleasure of this worlde, but lyfe euerlastyng. He that byeth that, byeth it good chepe, although he lose his life for it. These thinges doe I beate vpon, and put you in remembraunce of with so many wordes, beyng carefull, lest the wicked, that are gone from Christ, shoulde chaunce to beguyle anye wyth theyr iugglynges. Albeit without our warnyng, I thynke the spirite of Christ him selfe teacheth you sufficiently, whom you haue a continuall remembrauncer and teacher in youre heartes. As longe as he continueth styll in you, it is no nede, that any man teache you, what you ought to auoyde. He is a secret teacher, but he is the most sure teacher of all other. He beinge once receyued of you, teacheth you of all thynges, like as the sonne hath also promysed. For the spirite is true by nature, and can not lye. Therefore perseuer in that, whiche he hathe ones taught you. You holde the ryghte doctrine, you remembre it, there lacketh nothing, but that you persist still in it vnto the commyng of Christe, which I suppose, is not farre to. I beseche you eftesones & agayne, lytle children, persist in the doctrine of the spirite, that whan our prince and iudge shal appeare, the conscience of a good conuersacion maye geue vs a sure trust in him, and that we maye come forthe so, as he be not ashamed to acknowledge vs for hys dysciples, nor we alshamed to come in to his syghte. For with what mouthe shall we call hym mayster

and Lorde, yf we haue neyther taken heede to hys tea|chyng, nor obeyed his commaundement? with what mouth shall we call God father, yf we be out of kynde in all our life longe frō his ordinaunces? It is not simple baptisme, but the obserued righteousnes, that maketh vs the children of God. For what shall they heare, that cast out deuilles in the

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name of Iesu, that tolde thynges before hande, that excelled in miracles? / *knoVVe you no* •. He taketh thē for straūgers, in whō he seeth not the righte|ousnes of the gospell. And if you be persuaded, y• God is the autor of thys righteousnes, know this also, that whosoever not with wordes, but with endeuours, doynge and maners accomplysheth the ryghteousnes of the Gospell, he is borne of God, vnto whom he maye with a good conscience preace with that boldenes, that obedient children are wonte to preace to a mercyfull father withall. He wyll acknowlage them that are lyke hym, but those that are not lyke hym, he will not acknowlage.

The .iii. Chapter.

The texte

Beholde, what loue the father hathe shewed on vs, that we shoulde bee called (and be in dede) the sonnes of God. For this cause the world knoweth you not, because it knoweth not hym. Dearely beloued, now are we the sonnes of God, and yet it doeth not appeare, what we shawe. But we knowe, that when it shall appeare, we shalbe lyke hym. For we shall see hym as he is. And euery man that hath this hope in hym, pourgeth hym selfe, euen as he also is pure. Who|soever committeth sinne, committeth vnryghteousnes also, and sinne is vnryghteousnes. And ye knowe that he appeared, to take away oure synnes, and in hym is no synne. As many as byde in hym sinne not: whosoever sinneth, hath not sene hym, neither knowen hym.

**W** Here sincere loue is, there is a trusty confidence, and feare is awaye. See therefore what a notable loue he hath geuen vnto vs, whiche hauing contemned the worlde with his en|tisementes and terrours, perseuer styl in the gosselles doct|rine, that we shoulde be named and be, not onely faythfull seruauntes, not onely frendes, but the children of God. For so Christ taught, that we should cal vpō the heuēly father, yf we haue nede of any thyng. It is a moste high honour to be called the children of God, and a moste high felicitie to be the children of God. And forasmuche as we cleaue vnto hym with a constaunt godlynes, and are acknowlagd of hym, the world acknowlegeth vs not, but abhorreth and curseth vs as sedicious persons. It is no meruayle though the world

acknowlage not y<sup>e</sup> childrē of God, seing it acknowlageth not God himselfe, in that it denieth his sonne Iesus: let it nothing trouble your mindes, dearely beloued, that the world estemeth you as rascalles and abiecte persones. For with God we haue euen now thys excellent dignitie, that we are the sonnes of God, and are glad at our heartes, feling in our selues the spirite, not of bondage but of children, vpon assured confidence wherof we crye, *Abba, father*. The dig|nitie is present, but the dignitie hath not yet appeared. As yet it is the time of batayle, the daye of triumphe is not yet come. That daye shall declare vnto all men, howe greate a dignitie they haue, howe greate a felicitie they haue, that constauntly shewe themselues the children of God. It is not yet come to lyght, what we shalbe in the comming of Christ, howbeit we hold thys vpon a sure hope, that as soone as he shall appeare, to rendre vnto e|uery one rewardes accordinge to hys dedes, we that were in this worlde companions of afflictions, shall also be companions of the ioyes: & we that were lyke hym in the contempte of the worlde, shalbe lyke hym also in the maiestie of glorye. We sawe hym here in thys world afflicted, and of lowe

estate: then shal we see him as he is, and euer was, hygh and excellēt: and so seyng hym we shall also be transformed vnto hys ikenes, not onely in myndes, but also in bodyes. And we see hym now, howebeit, as it were through a myst with the eyes of fayth. But then we shal see hym after such maner as cannot be expressed. But that thyng, whiche we shalbe than per|fitely, we must forcast now i the meane tyme to the vttermost of our possi|ble power. To thintēt we may be like hī thē in glory, let vs be pure here frō all fylthynes. To thintent we maye see hym than, lette vs clense our eies now, leste when he shall appeare glisterynge bryght, he bee vnto vs more dreadfull than amiable. For he is not fortunatelye sene, but of them that are lyke hym. Therefore whosoeuer hath thys confidence in Christe, that he shal than be a companion of his glory, let hym in the meane time purge hymselfe with godly studyes cleane from worldlye affeccions, lyke as in hym was no maner of fylthynes of thys worlde, but is all together pure and heauenlye. Therefore it standeth vs in hande with all our possible powers, to bend our endeuours to thys ende, that nothyng remayne in vs of yearthy dregges. And lete no manne flatter hym selfe, sayinge: It is ynough for me vnto innocency, if I trāsgresse in none of those thinges that Moses lawe forbyddeth, nor in those thynges that are punyshed by the kynges lawes, as felonye, sacrilege, adultrie, murdre: but all maner of synne is vtterly to be eschewed. For whosoeuer offendeth by any meane, although he offende not agaynst the prescriptes of Moses, yet he synneth agaynst the lawe of the gospell, whiche is a greate deale holier than Mo|ses law. And for thys cause sake, Christ came once into the world, to shew the waye, whereby his comming agayne

shoulde become holesome and luckye vnto vs. He came to take awaye once for all not one synne or two, but al our synnes, where he onely was subiect vnto no maner of synne. He once purged vs frely from all synne, to make vs lyke manered vnto hym|selfe, whiche neither any lawe nor any mortall man coulde be hable to do. Through baptisme we are engrafted into hys holy sacred body. But it is our part for all that to endeuour in the meane tyme, that we fall not from our head. We are engrafted through his owne free mercy, but we shal fall awaye, if we slyde backe agayne into oure olde vices. He that abyde in Christ, perseuereth in innocencye, and is wonderous ware to shunne from all sinne, that he may dayly more and more growe in vertues, and be made more lyke hys head. He that absteyneth not from synnes, although he bee baptised, although he be called a christian, hath not yet sene fully, nor yet knowen hym. For who is it, yf he sawe with the eies of fayth, what greate dignitie it is to be chosen into the numbere of the sonnes of God, and what a fylthy shame it is to be geuen to the father deuyll, that woulde abyde to be plucked awaye from suche a bodye, to departe from suche a father, and to go out of kynde vnto so fylthy a tyrannye, to slyde of his owne accorde awaye from so hygh rewardes vnto so greate miserie?

The text.

Babes, lette no man deceyue you, he that doeth righteousnes, is righteous, euen as he is righteous. He that committeth sinne, is of the deuyl: for the deuyl sinneth sence the beginning. For thys purpose appeared the sonne of God, to looce the workes of the deuyl. Whosoeuer is borne of God, synneth not, for hys seed remayneth in hym, and he can not synne, because he is borne of God. In this are the children of God knowen, and the children of the deuyl. Who|soeuer doeth not ryghteousnes, is not of God, neither he that loueth not hys brother.

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Babes lette no man deceyue you, flatteryng you for your professyng the name of christians, as though that were ynoughe vnto felicitie. He is not iust, that speaketh iustice with his mouthe, but he that in his lyfe and mal|ners doeth iustice in dede, is iuste, lyke as Christe also shewed himselfe in his sayinges and doynge an example of all iustice. And he that truely and wholly cleaueth fast vnto him, absteyneth as much as he possible may, from all vncleanes of synnes, and the purenes of maners selfe declareth hym to be the sonne of God, whiche is good by nature, and knoweth no synne. But he that synneth although he haue receyued the sacramentes of Christe, yet he is begotten of hys father the deuyl, whiche is the prince and autor of all synne. Him whosoeuer foloweth, is lyke his father, in that same thing that he synneth in, & declareth hymselfe to be his sonne. God alloweth no felow|shyppe with synnes, for he sent his

sonne for thys intent into this worlde, to vanquishe the woorkes of the deuyll, that is to saye, all thynges, that are contrarye repugnaunt agaynst the charitie of the gospel. Of Adam we are all borne endaungered with sinnes: of God we are borne agayne by the sede of y<sup>e</sup> gosselles doctrine. As longe as the strength of this seede abyde in a man, he synneth not, neither can synne, that is to wete, because the loue of god byddeth hym naye: whiche loue rauisheth hym to the studie of well doyng, and calleth hym awaye from all desire of offendynge, in that he is the very true sonne of God: resembling playnly the behauiour and disposicion of his father and head. It is not the title, it is not baptisme, it is not the sacramentes that descerne the children of God from the children of the deuyll, but the puritie of lyfe, and charitie, expressyng and shewing it selfe in wel doinges. It is not idle if it be there. He that sheweth not that, neither sheweth in his dede that he loueth his brother, he is not borne of God. If he were alyuely membre of Christes body, he woulde haue loued the o|ther membres, for whom Christe died.

The texte

For thys is the tydings, that ye beard from the beginnynge, that ye shoude loue one ano|ther, not as Cayn whiche was of that wicked, and slewe hys brother. And wherefore slewe he him? Because his owne workes were euyll, and hys brothers good. Meruayle not my brethren though the worlde hate you. We knowe, that we are translated from death vnto lyfe, because we loue the brethren. De that loueth not his brother abideth in deathe. Whosoeuer hateth hys brother, is a man sleaer. And •e knowe, that no man sleaer hath eternall life abyding in hym. Hereby perceyue we loue▪ because he gaue his lyfe for vs: and we ought to gyue oure lyues for the brethren. But whoso hath thys worldes good and seeth his brother haue nede: and shutteth vp his compassion from hym: howe dwelleth the loue of God in hym?

Thys is the summe of Christen iustice: thys is it, that Christe gaue first of all vnto vs: this is it which we set forth before al thinges vnto you, that you shoulde with louynge one an other declare youre selues to be the sōnes of God, & the disciples of Christ. For in dede the hate of the neighbour is a step vnto murther. And malice is cleane cōtrary repugnaūt w<sup>t</sup> charitie. Cain was not the sonne of god, but was borne of the deuyll: why? because he went out of kynde from his good maker, and became lyke the deuyll, which beyng strycken with enuy, was the first that slewe man with deadly styng. Cayn resembled the disposicion of his father in sleaing Abell hys brother. But what was the cause of hys hate? For so the, because their lyfe was not alyke, and therefore they were of a contrarye kynde, albeit after

their bodely kinred, they were naturall borne brethren. They did bothe re|semble their father. Abel was an innocēt man, and kyndled to the studious mynde of well dooinge. Cain contrariwyse hauinge conceaued an hate al|gainst his brother, forcasted not howe to amende himselfe, but how to slea his brother. Lyke as in this case the wicked coulede not abyde the godlye, and the deuilles childe coulede not abyde y<sup>•</sup> childe of god, euen so you ought to take it for no maruai<sup>•</sup>e, brethren, thoughe men geuen to the worlde for|sake you. They hate them that are giltles. Let no man hate them againe. They, forsomuche as they are vowed vnto deathe, and serue the autor of deathe, imagine howe to put other to deathe. It is our parte to pitie them, and not to doe them one harme for an other. For in dede the charitie of the gossell hath ledde vs awaye from the studie of harme dooinge, vnto the <sup>••</sup>udie of wel dooing: & by this token we know that we are predestinat vn|to euerlasting life, & exempte from the tyranny of death, in y<sup>•</sup> we loue the bre|thren. He that loueth, bothe wisheth well & doeth well. The body lyueth by the breathe, the soule liueth by the spirite of Christ. Wher brotherly loue is not, there y<sup>•</sup> spirite of Christ is not. Whosoeuer therfore hateth his neigh|bour, he is deade & lyueth not inwardly. For although he haue a faithe, yet he hath a dead faith, where charitie is not present. Doe you make a fli<sup>•</sup>te at the hating of your brother, as though it were a light faulte? he that hateth his brother is a man<sup>•</sup>lear. He hath not thurst his sword in him, he hath not poisoned hi, he hath not flowen vpon him, he hath not cursed him, but onely wished him euyl<sup>•</sup>. Mans law doeth not damne him of man laughter, but in gods sight he is already damned of manslaughter. He y<sup>•</sup> hath receyued hate ones in to his brest, as much as in him is, he is a mās<sup>•</sup>ear. There are many kyndes of manslaughter: He that slea<sup>•</sup>th with sworde, suffreth punisshemēt euen by temporall lawes. He that killeth with poyson, is punisshed euen of them that are wicked. But he that sticketh his brother with the darte of a venemous tongue, although he be quitte by mannes lawes from the crime of manslaughter, yet by the lawe of the gospel he is giltye of manslaughter. He is as yet hitherto alyue, that the hater wissheth euil vnto, & yet he him selfe is al ready dead: That mans lyfe is safe, & this hath lost euerlastinge lyfe, being his owne murtherour. Wyll you see brethren, howe muche we ought to be farre from the desire of harme dooing? Turne your eies to the example of Christ. He so loued vs, whan we deserued nothinge, yea whan we deserued deathe, that he spent his lyfe for vs. Howe muche more ought we to put our lyfe in daunger for the saluaciō of our brethrē, yf occasion so require? namely we that succede into Christ our shepherdes rowme. He cō|mitted not his shepe vnto Peters keping, but whan he had thrise sayed he loued him, & by and by h<sup>•</sup>sheweth him y<sup>•</sup> kynde of death, that he might vn|derstonde, that the saluaciō of the flocke cō|mitted vnto his charge must be defended euen with the losse of lyfe. But wil he spende his lyfe, that grud|geth to helpe with his money? doeth a mā thinke it inoughe, yf he hurt not his brother, yf he speake to him

gently? Christ declared in his dedes, howe much he loued vs. He y<sup>•</sup> seeth his brother wāt meate, clothe, drinke or lod|ging, & hath substaunce to releue his nede withal, & is not moued with cō|passiō, but as though it were no poynt of his charge, letteth him alone vn|succoured: how cā it be beleued, y<sup>•</sup> the loue of god is in him▪ The heathē su<sup>•</sup> coureth y<sup>•</sup> heathē, & doest not y<sup>•</sup> being a Christiā succour thine euē christened▪

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Thou haste professed brotherly loue, and if thou haue it truly present with the, why doeth it ceasse in this case, whan thy brother is pyned with nede? Thou callest him brother, and shewest thou no token of brotherly affecciō?

The texte

My babes, let vs not loue in word, neither in tong: but in dede & in verytie. Hereby we know that we are of the verytie, can quyet our heartes before hym. For if our hearte condemne vs, God is greater then oure hearte, and knoweth all thynges. Dear<sup>•</sup>ly beloued, if our hearte con|demne vs not, then haue we truste to God warde: and whatsoeuer we aske, we receyue of hym, because we kepe hys commaundementes, and do those thynges which are pleasant in hys sight. And this is his commaundement, that we beleue on the name of his sonne Iesus Christ, and loue one another, as he gaue commaundement. And he that kepeth his commaundementes dwelleth in him, and he <sup>••</sup> him, and hereby we knowe that he abydeth in vs, euen by the spirite which he hath geuen vs.

My babes let vs not loue one another in wordes onely. Let the loue be in the hearte, rather than in the tongue: and let it expresse it selfe in dedes, rather than in speaking. Let this worde *Brother* be in our dayly commun|cacion, yea but that we may be true, let the dedes be answerably like to the comunicacion: as often as occasion serueth, let vs declare a true brother|ly loue to be in vs in dede. Let not our brother want any thing y<sup>•</sup> we haue, whether he desire coate, or meate, or lodging, either cōforte, teaching or ad|monicion. Thus if we doe with readie good willes, we shall knowe by this token, that we are the children of the trueth, and that we loue not countre|faytlye, but purely. The trueth is Christe him selfe, vnto whose eyes we shall proue oure conscience, y<sup>•</sup> we be allowed bothe with God and men: and by our dedes men shall knowe, that there is no dissembled loue among vs: god loketh vpō the puritie of the harte. We shal succour our brothers nede, yea but so as we releue his necessitie, not to maintene his riotous prodigallitie: and we shal succour him willingly, without hope of reward to returne vnto vs therfore, nether for



dayne glories sake. Menne see not the mynde, but the mynde knoweth it selfe, and is seene vnto the eies of god. If menne prayse vs, and a naughtie conscience condemne vs, howsoever we deceaue men, we can not escape the iudgement of God. Mans heart hathe secret passages to and fro, and doubtfull lurking holes, but there is nothinge so hidden, and so close, but god pearceth it. He knoweth all thinges better than we: he knoweth our harte that made our harte. He hathe eies in euery place, that is present in euery place. Dearly beloued, yf our harte condemne vs not vnto god, yf our mynde be syncere and vprightly playne, yf we doe of a mere & a pure loue that we doe: suche as we shewe our selues towar|des our neighbour, suche a one shal god shewe him selfe to vs. Yf we gladlly and with a good wyll forgeue our brother his faulte, God shall easily forgeue •s our synnes also. Yf we readily geue vnto our nedy brother, as often as he desireth our helpe, we shal with a sure trusty boldenes aske also of god, that whiche shall perteigne to saluacion and necessitie, nether shall he denye our askinges. Yf we saye vnto him: *Forgeue us our trespasses, as VVe for geue them that trespassed against us*, and yet hate our brother inwardly: shal not our owne conscience by and by crye out against vs? with what face▪ askest thou of god, that whiche thou deniest thy neighbour? with what mouthe askest thou the couenaunt, whan thou thy selfe performest not y• condicion? He promised to forgeue vs our trespasses, yea but so that we doe heartely

forgeue our brother his trespasses. If we saye with the mouthe, I forgeue hym, and yet kepe euyll wyll styll in oure hearte: oure naughty conscience shall take awaye our confidence of obteynynge, the thinge that we aske of God. If we bydde our brother gently, *God spede*, and helpe him nor whan he hathe nede of our helpe, we maye not hope that God will helpe, seinge we helped not our brother. If we turne the deafe eare towarde at hys commaundement, he will turne the deafe eare againe towardes our prayers. It is a shamelesnes, not a godlynes, to desire fauour of hym, whose commaū|dementes a man doeth not pa•se vpon. But and if we obserue his cōmaun|dementes, if we doe whatsoeuer shall please him, and •o doe, that we may be allowed in his eies, whiche seeth euery thing: hereof shall we conceaue a sure confidence to obteyne. Here will the Iewe, the superstitious law kelper, saye vnto me: I kepe the sabboth dayes, I am washen, I faste, I absteyne from forbydden meates, I dooe not steale, God shall heare me. But thys is not the commaundement that I talke of: which than? For|sothe that we shoulde repose all the whole hope and confidence of oure saluacion in Iesu Christ the sonne of God, by whome the fathers wyll was to geue all thinges frely vnto vs. Is thys ynough now? No forsothe: but we must loue eche one other according to his example. So he cōmaunded, but that whiche he commaunded, he did

fyrst performe himselfe in dede. He doleth not yet truly loue Christe, that hateth the membre of Christe: he doeth not yet loue Christe, that wisheth euil to the man, for whome Christe died. Therefore he that kepeth that one only commaundement of loue, kepeth all. With this g<sup>o</sup>ue shall we be fast ioyned to Christ, so that he be in vs, and we againe in him. He by hys spirite shall dwell in oure hartes, if charitie bee warme there: The spirite of Christ is not the autor of hate, but the free ge|uour of brotherly loue. He by the layinge on of thapostles handes is pow|red in to them that are baptised, but he leapeth backe and flyeth awaye, if charitye happen to bee quenched out. By thys token therfore we shall per|ceauie that the gi<sup>o</sup>te of the spirit, which we toke in baptisme, abyde in vs, if brotherly loue contynue with vs still. Loke howe muche charitie waxeth colde, so muche will the holy gooste withdrawe him selfe awaye.

#### The .iiii. Chapter.

The texte

Dearely beloued, beleue not euery spirite: but proue the spirites, whether they are of god or not, for many false Prophetes are gone out into the worlde. Herby shall ye knowe the spilrite of god. Euery spirite that confesseth that Iesus Christ is come in the flesshe, is of god. And euery spirite, whiche confesseth not that Iesus Christe is come in the flesshe, is not of god. And this is that spirite of Antichrist, of whome ye haue hearde, howe that he should come: and euen nowe already is he in the worlde.

**I** Haue geuen you a token, dearely beloued, whereby you may perceauie, whether the spirite of Christ be in you or not. For there are sondry sortes of spirites in mē, yea but dissembling spirites, and naughtie spirites. Therefore doe not vt erly belleue euery spirite. There are many here and there, that boast them selues to haue the spirite of God, but trye you whether they procede of God or not. Thys worlde hathe also a spirite of hys owne, and pretendeth as though it had the spirite of God.

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The spirite of God enspireth the prophetes, but there are to manye false prophetes now that are gon out in to the worlde, and falsely saye that they speake by the inspiracion of the spirit of God, whan they are ledde with the spirit of the worlde. Will you therfore haue a more certayne argument of the spirit of God? Heare the speaker, and you shall vnderstande. Euery spilrite which confesseth, that Iesus Christe the autor of euerlasting saluacion promysed long a goe vnto the worlde, is now all ready come, hauing recey|ued a very humayne body, like as he had promysed by his prophetes, he is of God, in that he acknowlageth the

sonne of God. Contrary wise he that denyeth this, forasmuche as he is a lyer, he is not of God. For no man doeth truly professe the sonne, onles he be enspired of the father. But those doe not onely denye him, which speake against him in woordes openly, but also they that lyue after such a sorte, as though Christe were not the example of godlynes vnto men, or as though he were not the autor of perfite saluacion: and so they feine some other Messias to be loked for, because Christes doctrine is to muche variable from theyr gredye lustes. Yf he woulde haue fauoured the voluptuous pleasures of the fleshe, if he would haue promysed great substaunce of riches, if he woulde haue geuen honours and empires of y<sup>e</sup> world, they would haue long agoe acknowlaged their Messias. But now forasmuche as he doeth teache men to despise these thinges, & enriceth them to take vp theyr crosse, and telleth that all felicitie must be loked for in the worlde to come, they deny him to be the olde promysed rede|mer of mankinde, and bydde loke for an other, that shoulde promyse the cō|modities of the bodye, and the goodes of this worlde. Nether is it ynough to confesse Christ, onles we confesse him all wholly and entierly. He that dy|uideth him, either takinge awaye the diuine nature, whiche he hath all one with the father: or the humaine nature, which he toke of a woman hys mo|ther, that spirit is not of God, but is the spirit of Antichrist, of the whiche spirite ye haue all ready hearde, that he should come, yea he is now come al|ready, and hathe to doe in them, whiche being addicte to worldly delices, fight agaynst the spirite of Christe.

The texte

Lytell children, ye are of God, and haue ouercome them: for greater is he that is in you, then he that is in the worlde. They are of the worlde therefore speake they of the worlde, and the worlde heareth them. We are of God. He that knoweth God, heareth vs: he that is not of god, heareth vs not. Herby knowe we the spirite of veritie, and the spirite of erreure. Dearely belo|ued, let vs loue one another: for loue commeth of god. And euery one that loueth, is borne of God, and knoweth God. •e that loueth not, knoweth not god: for God is loue: In this ap|peared the loue of god to vs warde, because that God sent his onely begotten sonne into the worlde, that we might lyue thorowe him. Herein is loue, not that we loued God, but that he loued vs, and sent his sonne to make agrement for our synnes.

There is no cause why you should be afayed of these sortes of men, li|tell children. Forasmuch as you are of god, and haue his spirite: you haue by him ouercome the Antichristes. In dede you of youre selues are but weake, but he that dwelleth in you, is greater and myghtier than he, that dwelleth in the worlde. The deuill fighteth agaynst you by hys membres, but God by his spirit defendeth you. They, forasmuche as they perteyne to the fashion of the worlde, and haue receyued the spirite of the worlde, are wisely skilled in the worlde, and talke of worldly matters, and their

doc|trine is acceptable gear vnto them, which are also geuen them selues vn|to the worlde. No man dooeth lyghtly beleue, that he is an enemye to those

thinges, whiche he behemently loueth. They loue earthie thynges, & their doctrine sauoureth of the earth. We are of god, he that knoweth hym (in dede he knoweth him that loueth him) herkeneth vnto vs, whiche teache heauenly thinges, & matters worthy of god. He y<sup>•</sup> is not of god, heareth not vs, but abhorreth frō the gospels doctrine, which biddeth mē geue away their ryches, defye voluptuous pleasures, to reioyce in afflictions, to esteeme euen life it selfe of no value for righteousnes sake, to loke for the relwarde of well done dedes in the resurreccion, which they either beleue shal not come at all, or woulde not haue it to happen: which doctryne cōmaun|deth also through sincere loue to spend euen a mans life for his neighbours sake, where as the man of a worldely spirite prouideth for his owne cōmo|ditie at al handes, yea euen with wronging of his brother. By these tokens therfore you may knowe the true spirite of god, from the false spirite of the worlde. Therfore dearely beloued, forasmuche as we are of god, & not of the worlde, let vs loue eche one other, & let euery one serue his neighbours profites rather than his own, for loue is of god. He therfore that is garnis|shed with this loue, is borne of god, & doeth truly knowe god. And he that is voide of loue, hath not yet knowē god, because god hīselfe is loue. He ge|ueth him selfe vnto vs, as often as he geueth vs his loue. He hath declared his loue to vs ward, that we should also declare ours towards our neigh|bour. But some man wil say: we acknowlage the sōnes charitie, but wher|by doe we knowe the fathers loue towards vs? Forsothe by this: that he sent his onely sonne, (than the whiche he hath nothing more dearer) in to this worlde, & gaue him vnto death, that we by his death shoulde atteyne euerlastyng lyfe. And this is also a greater and a more notable miracle of loue, that beinge prouoked by no good turne of ours, he loued vs so e nota|blie. He that loueth his louer agayne, is nothing but thankful: and should haue no humanitie except he dyd it. We loued the worlde, and were turned from the loue of god: and yet God loued vs fyrst and of hys owne accorde. And when he was iustly offended at oure synnes, neyther was there anye manne vpon yearthe boyde of synne, that coulde reconcile vs vnto hym, (for it behoueth hym to be full of grace, that muste make intercession vnto hym that is offended, for suche as bee malefactors) he sente hys sonne downe from heauen, to sacrifice hymselfe vnto the father, and with thys most pure oblacion to make hym mercyfull vnto vs. What canne be Imalgined more notable than thys loue? what can be thought more feruent? what can be imagined more plenteous?

Dearely beloued, yf god so loued vs, we oughte also to loue one another. No man hath sene god at anye tyme. Yf we loue one another, god dwelleth in vs, and hys loue is perfecte in vs. Hereby knowe wee that wee dwell in hym, and he in vs: because he hathe geuen vs of hys spilrite. And we haue sene, and doe testifie, that the father sent the sonne to bee Sauour of the worlde: Whosoeuer confesseth, that Iesus is the sonne of god, in hym dwelleth god, and he in god. And wee haue knowen, and beleue the loue that God hathe to vs. God is loue: and he that dwelleth in loue, dwelleth in god, and god in hym. Herein is the loue perfecte in vs, that wee shoulde haue truste in the daye of iudgemente. For as he is, euen so are wee in thys worlde. I here is no feare in loue, but perfecte loue casteth out feare, for feare hath paynfulnes. •e that feareth, is not perfecte in loue. We loue hym, for he loued vs fyrste. Yf a man saye: I loue god, and yet hate his brother, he is a liar. For howe can he that loueth not his bro|ther whō he hath sene, loue god whō he hath not sene? And this commaundement haue we of him: that he whiche loueth god, shoulde loue his brother also.

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Dearely beloued, yf God, whiche hathe no nede of vs, of hys owne ac|corde and wyllyngly hath so muche loued vs, we ought also after hys ex|ample to loue eche one other. The sonne of God shewed hym selfe visiblye vnto vs, but no man hath sene God the father at any tyme with his bodily eies, and yet he is perceyued by the euident tokens of thynges. We feele hym angrie, we fele hym mercyfull, we fele hym to be absent, we fele hym to be presente. We are hable to testifie our mutuall loue towards God by none other argumente, than yf we loue euery one other, lyke as he hathe loued vs. He loued vs frely without cause, he loued vs for thys purpose, to saue vs. Yf we loue eche one other after such wise: god, which is loue, (as I sayed) abyde in vs. It is a cōmune loue to beare good wil to him y• deser|ueth well, to loue hym that is hable to requite oure loue, and to testifie our good will with one good turne for an other: but y• loue of god is perfite to|wardes vs. He loued vs of his own accorde, he loued vs being straungers, he loued vs, of whome no maner requitall coulde returne to hym agayne, he loued vs euē to the losse of his onely begotten sōne. If we loue our neigh|bour in a semblable wyse, than the loue of God is perfite in vs, declaryng also that God hymselfe is in vs. Lyke as all one spirite knytteth the mem|bres of the body together, and maketh them one body: euen so the spirite of god doeth in a maner glue together and knytte bothe vs with hym, and euery one to other, and as it were dryueth perforce all into one. And yf the spirite of god, which inspireth into our heartes y• loue of our neighbour, be stronge in vs, doubtles we knowe by thys token, bothe that we abyde in God, and God lykewyse in vs.

Therefore he is an enemie vnto loue, that denyeth Iesus to be the sonne of God, whiche gaue hymselfe to redeme mankind. But of this matter we were euen lookers vpō, we sawe it with our eies, we hearde it with our eares, we handled it with our handes, and of a matter so many waies prouedly knowē, we beare witnes to the whole worlde, that god sent his sonne, to saue the world with his death, in case it woulde repent from his olde errorrs, and ordre the life of it from hence|forthe accordyng to the rule of the gospell. For he dyd not onely sende hym to saue the nacion of the Iewes, but he gaue hym also to be a sauour to al the whole worlde. He therfore that confesseth that Iesus is the sonne of god, whom the prophetes had prophecied before shoulde come, he abydeth in God, and god in him. For he knoweth the trueth, and embraceth loue. He acknowlageth not the loue of God towarde him, that doeth no expresse it in his neighbour. But as for vs, we haue both knowen by experience, and beleue with our harte, and confesse wyth oure mouthe, and expresse in oure workes the dedes that God hath bestowed vnto vs. It remaineth, that we shoulde perseuer in that whiche is begonne, and not to offende, so as God be not bothe plucked awaye from vs, and wee drawen awaye from God. God (as I sayed before) is loue. Therefore he that continueth styll in loue, continueth styll in God, and God lykewyse in hym: because the mutuall knotte of the spirite of God abideth. Wyl you also haue an other token ge|uen you, whereby you maye trye, whether the loue of god bee perfite in you? If we know our owne conscience to be good, and that we dreade not the daye of iudgement, wherein they shall be seperated from Christe, that haue not folowed Christ. They shall quake, when they shal heare that hor|rible

voyce. *Depart from me* But we looke for that daye with a trusty bolde|nes, that is to were, knowyng to our selues, y<sup>•</sup> lyke as he was conuersaunt in the world, euen so are we also in the worlde. He toke no maner of spotte of the worlde, but cleansed the worlde from it owne fylthynes, and drewe it, as muche as in hym was, into hys purenes. Euen so wee also to oure powers are not onely not mingled with y<sup>•</sup> worlde, but also we rather driue it, with teachyng of the gospell, and chaste examples of lyfe, vnto Christe. The dreade of goddes iudgemente spryngethe out of an euyl conscience. Feare therfore agreeth not with loue. For loue encreaseth assured confildence: which, yf it be perfite, shal dryue quite out of minde al feare. But it is glad, as often as that daye of iudgemente commeth in his mynde: first ha|uyng a very good opinion of the good God, and hauing it selfe a good con|science. Loue causeth gladnes, feare causeth formentynge sorowefulnes. Moreouer he that is afrayed, declareth hymselfe therin not yet to be per|fite in loue. As much as wāteth vnto loue, so much encreaseth to feare. For he is afrayed, lest he shall not

fynde God the iudge mercyfull vnto hym, seyng he shewed hymselfe vntractable vnto his neighbour. That daye shal openly declare, who hath bene a true louer in thys worlde. We loue God: and no meruaile, seyng he first loued vs. For we coulde not be hable to loue hym, excepte he drewe vs vnto hymselfe with hys loue. Thys same there|fore, that we loue God, is hys benefite. Finally, in that we loue God, we testifie it in louinge oure neighbour in whome he wyll be loued. If a man wyll saye: I loue God, when he hateth hys brother, he is a lyar. For when the wycked, of whom for the moste parte they doe not onely not loue God, but also they beleue not that God is: yet for al y<sup>e</sup> they after a sort loue their neighbour, either because he is their kynsman or ailiaunce, or because he is acquaynted and familiar with them, or at the leaste because man seeth the other to be a man, lyke as the very beastes loue euery one hys own kynd by the instincte of nature: howe shall he loue God, whome he hath not sene at any tyme, whan he hateth hys neyghboure, whom he seeth? Furthermore howe standethe it together that he loueth God, that passeth not vpon the commaundementes of God? If a man woulde crye: I loue the kyng, and for al y<sup>e</sup> setteth naught by the kynges proclamacions, would there any man beleue hym? we haue thys speciall commaundement of oure Emperoure, that he whiche loueth God, shoulde also loue hys brother, whether he bee good or badde. Yf he be good, let hym loue Christ in hym: yf he be badde, let hym loue hym to thys ende, that he maye be conuerted vnto Christ.

#### The .v. Chapter.

The texte

Whosoeuer beleueth that Iesus is Christ, is borne of God. And euery one that loueth hym whiche begat, loueth hym also whiche was begotten of hym. By thys we knowe, that we loue the children of God, when we loue God and kepe his commaundementes. For thys is the loue of God, that we kepe hys commaundementes, and hys commaundementes are not greuous. For all that is borne of God, ouercommeth the worlde. And thys is the victory that ouercom|meth the worlde, euen our fayth. Who is it that ouercommeth the worlde: but he whiche bele|ueth, that Iesus is the sonne of God? This Iesus Christ is he that came by water and bloud, not by water onely: but by water and bloude. And it is the spirite that beareth witnes, because the spirite is trueth. (For there are thre whiche beare recorde in heauen, the father, the worde, and the holy ghost. And these thre are one.) And there are thre whiche beare recorde in (earth) the spirite, and water, and bloud: and these thre are one. Yf we receyue the witnes of men, the witnes of God is greater. For thys is the witnes of God (that is greater) whiche<sup>e</sup> he testifie



of his sonne. He that beleueth on the sonne of God, hath the witnes in himselfe. He that beleueth not god, hath made hym a lyar, because he beleued not the record that god gaue of his son. And thys is the recorde, howe that God hath geuen vnto vs eternall lyfe, and this lyfe is in hys sonne. He that hath the sonne hath lyfe: & he that hath not the sonne of god, hath not lyfe.

**W** Ho soeuer beleueth that Iesus is Christ, that is to say, him of whom we must nedes aske al the succoures of our saluacion, and beleueth that in his hearte: he is borne of god, and is called alrede into the nūmbre of the sonnes of God. In dede he can not chose but loue, y<sup>e</sup> is a sonne. Thā whosoeuer loueth him heartely that is y<sup>r</sup> father, loueth him also y<sup>e</sup> was borne of him, that is to wete, his brother, with whome he hath all one commune father. By this tokē we proue, that we doe truly loue y<sup>r</sup> children of God, yf we first loue God him selfe heartely. For there is nothing truely loued, except it be loued for his sake. Than that we loue God, it shall euidently so appeare, yf we kepe his commaundementes, and kepe them chearfully and gladly: for his commaundementes are none otherwyse greuous. For what is greuous to the louer? what is greuous to him that goeth post haste to suche maner rewardes. The worlde obieteth terrible apparaunces of euilies, pouertie, vanyshement, slaunder, enprisonmentes, whippinges, deathes. It is a great fraye, but the victorie is made readye: For what soeuer is borne of God, ouercommeth the worlde. But with what furnitures doeth he ouercome y<sup>r</sup> worlde? with riches? with garisons of men? with engines of warre? with worldly learning? no, no: they ouercome the worlde (as cruelly rageing as it is) throughe a stedfast onely faithe, wherwith they committe them selues wholly vnto God their protectour. Thy riches are snatched awaye, yea but what sayeth faithe to that? *Thou haste a treasure in heauen*. Thou art throwen out to be a vanished man, yea but the countrey of heauen loketh for his countreyman. Thy body is turmoyled with tormentes: yea, but with them, are bought euerlasting ioyes. Death is deuised for the: yea but after it shall folowe lyfe that neuer shall dye. Who is it than that ouercometh the worlde? not a lorde, not the riche man, not a philosopher, not a kyng, but he who soeuer he be, that beleueth verely, that Iesus is the sonne of God. Beleue that which he hath promised, and it shal nothing moue thee, whatsover the worlde purposeth against thee. He ouercame the world first, & atteyned immortalitye: he came into this world hauing takē our mortal body, to get the victorye for vs, to shew the meane of victorye getting, to cause y<sup>r</sup> rewardes to be certaynely reckoned vpon. But with what furnitures came he armed withall? He came by water and bloude, euen Iesus Christe: by water, that he myght washe vs cleane from our synnes: by bloude, that he myght geue vs immortall lyfe. Hys owne wyll was to be baptised, beinge cleane voyde from all synne, that he myght

frelye geue vnto vs innocencye: hys owne wyll was to dye on the crosse, that he myght open vnto vs the waye vnto immortalitie. He dyd not onelye testifie by these two tokens, that he was Christ and the sauour of the worlde, in that he receyued baptisme, as a synfull man: in that he dyed as a malefactour, where he one onely & none among all but he, was Innocent from all synne: but the spirite also ap|pearynge in the likenes of a doue, bare recorde of him, that it was he, whō the father had geuen to be the sauour of the worlde. For the spirite is also the trueth, as the father and the sonne is: there is one trueth of all, like as there is one nature of all.

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For there are three in heauen, that beare recorde vnto Christ, the father, the worde, and the spirite: the father, whiche sending once and eftsones a voice downe from heauen, testified openly, that he is his dearly beloued sonne, in whom nothing coulde doe amisse: the worde, whiche hauing done so many miracles, whiche in his death and resurreccion declared him selfe to be the true Christ, bothe God and man, the peacemaker betwene God and men: the holy gooste, whiche descended vpon his head whan he was baptised, and that after his resurreccion fell vpon his disciples. And of these three there is all one most perfite agrement: the father is the autor, the sonne the messenger, the holy goost the remembrauncer. There are three thinges also on earthe, that beare recorde vnto Christ: his humayne spirite whiche he put from him one the crosse: the water and the bloode, that ranne out of his syde whan he was deade. And these three witnesses doe agree The other declared him to be God, these recorde that he was man. Iohn also bare witnesse. And yf we receyue witnesse of men, it is reason, that the witnesse of God be of more importaunce with vs. For the testimonie of God the father is manifest: *Thys is my VVelbeloued Sonne, in VVhom I am pleased, heare him.* What thing can be spoken more plainly or more fully? he that beleueth truly in goddes sonne Iesus Christ, and hath reposed al the succours of his lyfe in him, so that trusting in his promisses he contemneth all thinges, that this worlde can make a shewe of, whether they be amiable or dreadfull, hathe a witnesse in him selfe, and beareth witnesse vnto the sonne of God. For whan (throughe thinspiration of the spirite of Christe) he defieth euen deathes for his loue, he beareth no trifling witnesse vnto mē, that they are no vaine thīges that Christ hath taught and promised. He that trusteth not in god, but putteth his trust in the worlde, he, as muche as in him is, maketh god a lyer, whiche hath promised felicitie vnto them that woulde herkē vnto his sonne Iesu Christ: where as he in his conuersaciō teacheth that felicitie is to be asked of the worlde, & cleaueth so vnto the cōmodities of this lyfe, as thoughe nothing of a man remayned after the deathe of the bodye. The father cryeth: *Heare him.* And his lyfe, that beleueth not, sayeth: Heare the worlde. For whan the sonne prayed the father, that those whiche beleued or shoulde beleue in him, might haue

eternall lyfe, the fathers voyce was heard, testifiyng as by the sound of a trompet, that his prayers should be allowed. The father therfore hath geuen vs euerlastyng lyfe, shewinge of whome it should be asked, euen of his sonne Iesus Christe. His doctrine who soeuer embraceth, his example whosoever foloweth, hys promises whosoever trusteth vnto, he bothe possessedeth the sonne and hath life: the pledge wherof he kepeth in the meane time, euen the spirite of god, throughe the vndoubted confidence whereof he is bolde to call God, father: He that is a straunger from the sonne, is estraunged also from lyfe.

The texte.

These thinges haue I written vnto you that beleue on the name of the sonne of god, that ye maye knowe, howe that ye haue eternall lyfe, and that ye maye beleue on the name of the sonne of god. And thys is the trust that we haue in hym: that yf we aske any thyng accordinge to hys wyll, he heareth vs. And yf we knowe that he heare vs whatsoever wee aske, we knowe, that we haue the petitions, that we desire of hym. If any man see his brother sinne a synne not vnto death, let hym aske, and he shall geue hym lyfe for them that sinne not vnto death. There is a synne vnto death, for whiche saye I not that a man shoulde praye. All vnrighteousnes is sin, and ther is a synne not vnto death. We knowe, that whosoever is borne of god, synneth not: but he that is begotten of god, kepeth himselfe, and that wicked toucheth hym not. We know, that we are of god, and the worlde is all together set on wickednes. We knowe, that the sonne of god is come, and hath geuen vs a mynde to knowe hym, whiche is true: and wee are in him that is true, through his sonne Iesus Christ. This same is very god, and eternal lyfe. Babes, kepe your selues from images. Amen.

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These thinges therfore doe I repete and beate vnto you with so many wordes, lest any man shoulde perswade vnto you the contrarye. But take it for a sure and an vndoubted certayntie, that it is true whiche you haue beleued: that euerlastyng lyfe is ordayned for you throughe Iesus Christe, whose ioyned felowe heires you are. You haue already the ryght clayme and gage, and shall haue possession of the thyng selfe in hys tyme. Therefore you that beleue in the sonne of God, beleue stedfastlye, and put youre sure trust in hym daylye more and more. He wyll not fayle you in the promyses of euerlastyng lyfe, that fayleth you not nowe euen in thys lyfe. For in dede the spirite of Christe geueth this confidence vnto you, that whatsoever you shal aske in y<sup>r</sup> name of y<sup>e</sup> sonne, you should obtaine it, if ye aske accordinge to hys wyll, that is, yf you be suche when you come to praye as he woulde haue you to come: that is to saye, pure from all maner hate of your brother. (For he obteyneth nothyng at

goddes hande, of whom his neygh|bour obteyneth not forgeuenes of his fault:) And if you aske those thinges that are auailable to the lyfe of heauen, and make to the glorye of Christ. Or elles we for the moste parte knowe not what we shoulde aske of God, and many tymes for holsume thynges we desire hurtfull thynges, yf the spirite of Christe put vs not in mynde, what were expedient for vs to aske: but as ofte as we aske after thys sorte, we are sure that god heareth oure prayers: we are sure that he wyll frely geue vs whatsoeuer we shall aske. So hath he promised vs, and is hable to performe whatsoeuer he promi|seth, and wyll performe whatsoeuer is holsume for vs. Neither shall he onely encrease his giftes in vs, being prouoked therunto by oure prayers, but also he wyll pardon vs oure daylye offences, without whome the fel|blenes of mans nature can scarcely be hable to endure longe: and he shall not onely pardon euery one hys offences, yf he desire pardon, but he shall also heare the brother praying for the brothers offences, so that the sinne bee of suche sorte, that it doeth not quenche out brotherly loue, althoughe it doe somewhat obscure it. For there is a synne that cannot bee imputed vn to weakenes, nor be healed with lyght and easye remedies: as whan a manne vpon a sette malyce persecuteth the christen felowshyppe, where he hymselfe hath professed Christe, and in pretence of religion goeth aboute to subuert religiō. The desperate frowardnes of suche a one deserueth not the prayer of godly menne: and yet perfite charitie prayeth also for suche, wyschyng for those thynges that cannot possiblye be done. There is no manne that prayeth for the deuyll, because he doeth wittinglye throughe malyce oppugne them, whome God woulde well vnto. Perhappes no prayer should also be made for them, that are translated into hys affection: and are rather to be shunned, that they doe no harme, than to bee releued with prayers, excepte they shewe an hope of their repentaunce. Suche a disease nedeth more strong remedies, and is greater, than can bee taken alway by dayly praier, wherby lighter offences are taken away, which are done of feble weakenes, & not of purposed frowardenes. Whatsoeuer is committed besyde perfite righteousnes, is sin: but there be many differen|ces of synnes. There is some synne, whiche althoughe it demynyshe and blotte innocencye, yet it vtterlye quencheth not out christian charyte: as whan by occasion we ouershote a worde agaynste oure frende, whiche

we are sory for by and by that it ouer shot vs: whan a sodayne angre hath russhed out at a worde, that wee woulde wyshe by and by myghte bee called backe agayne: whan throughe the swetenes of meate or drynke rel|ceyuyng, wee take somewhat more then the necessitie of nature doeth require. And to pardon these offences God is easie, yf he bee called vpon with mutual prayers. Suche maner of faultes of children, those that be

gentyll parentes doe for the moste parte wynke at, whiche woulde not suffre greater offences. Albeit there is none so lyght a faulte that ought to be neglected. Whatsoeuer is done amysse, is euyl and to bee eschewed of godlye folkes, and yf it bee neglected, it drawethe by lytell and lytell vnto deathe. But lyke as spedye remedy oughte to be had for these lighter offences, whiche men are scarce hable to auoyde: euen so god forbydde, that he whiche hath once renounced the worlde, and dedicated hymselfe vnto god, shoulde be tombled backe agayne into anye greate notable cryme. By professing of y<sup>e</sup> gospel we are made the childrē of God, and membres of Christ. And it is not conuenient, that the children should diffre so greatly from the father, and the membres from the head. Therefore he that throughly vn|derstandeth, that he is borne of god, taketh more hede that he doe no euyl, than of deathe it selfe: and kepeth hymselfe that he haue nothyng a doe with that naughtie lorde (*deuill*) whom he serued before together with the worlde. Lyke as Christe beyng once dead rose agayne to lyfe, and rose algayne to lyfe neuer to dye any more: euen so he that throughe baptism is once dead vnto the worlde, and risen agayne to newnes of lyfe with Christ, it is not mete for hym to doe that thyng agayne, for the whyche Christe must dye agayne. Let them be affrayed of the worlde, whiche are not truely borne agayne of god: which haue not with al the pith of their whole hear|tes receyued the seede of the gosselles doctrine. We knowe, that wee are truly of god, whome neyther the euyl thynges nor the good thynges of thys world can separte from Christe. The whole world is set all together on naughtines. Whiche waye soeuer a man turneth hym, there is occasion offred of thynges to turne vs awaye quite from the innocent vpryghtnes of lyfe. But from the worldes enchauntmentes the sonne of god hathe once delyuered vs: whiche came into the worlde for thys cause, to exempte vs out of the contagious infeccion of the worlde. He hathe dryuen awaye the darkenes of oure former ignoraunce, and hathe geuen vs an vnderstan|dyng that is lyghtened with the lyght of the gospel: to thintent we should knowe the true god & the free geuer of al righteousnes: who onely had no|thyng a doe with the worlde: and we are in hym truly, in that we folowe hys doctrine and promyses with an vpryght conscience, as longe as wee are in hys sonne Iesus Christe, whome he sent into the worlde for that in|tent. He is the true god, whiche onely ought to be honoured: and the true lyfe, whiche onely oughte to bee desyred. Lytell chyldren, yf you doo truely knowe the true God, beware of false goddes, and vayne Images, whyche the worlde hathe in honoure. He wurshyppeth an Idole, that maketh moneye hys God. He wurshyppeth an Idole, that maketh hys bely hys God. He wurshyppeth an Idole, that for worldelye honoures sake, despysethe the commaundementes of GOD. There be manye suche

kyndes of Images. Beware you of all, yf you wyll abyde in the wurshippe of the true God. Whyche humble prayer of myne he vouchesafe to make good, by whose goodnes wee are delyuered from oure erroures.

Amen.

Thus endeth the Paraphrase vpon the fyrste epistle of Sainct Iohn.